AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): An information processing method for storing a plurality of files having both ~~binary~~ content data and metadata related to the ~~binary~~ content data into a storage medium, comprising:

a reading step of reading a file;

a determining step of determining whether the read file includes metadata;

a separating step of separating the read file into metadata and content data if it is determined in the determining step that the read file includes metadata;

a first storage step of storing said metadata of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file into a first block storage area that is a continuous area capable of storing metadata of the plurality of files on said storage medium;

a second storage step of storing ~~binary~~ content data of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file related to said metadata into a second block storage area other than said first block storage area on said storage medium; and

a third storage step of storing link information that links said metadata of the plurality of files stored in said first block storage area with said ~~binary~~ content data of the plurality of files stored in said second block storage area, in correspondence with said metadata, into said first block storage area,

wherein at third storage step, each of said link information is stored into an area adjacent to an area where corresponding metadata is stored.

Claim 2 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said adjacent area is a sector next to the area where said metadata is stored.

Claim 3 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein at said third storage step, an adjacent area having a fixed length is allocated, and said link information is stored in the area.

Claim 4 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said link information is described as a path and a file name of said ~~binary~~ content data.

Claim 5 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said link information is a head sector number of an area where said ~~binary~~ content data is stored.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, further comprising a registration step of registering link information, that links said metadata stored in said first block storage area with said ~~binary~~ content data stored in said second block storage area, in a database.

Claims 7-9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said storage medium is a magneto-optic disk, and wherein an inner radial side of said magneto-optic disk is allocated as said first block storage area.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said first block storage area is allocated by generating an area file having a size the same as that of said first block storage area and holding the file on said storage medium.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): The method according to claim 11, wherein at said first storage step, said area file is deleted, then said metadata is stored from a start position of an area where said file has been stored, and a remaining area of said first block storage area following storage of said metadata is held again as an area file.

Claim 13 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said first storage area is allocated in a directory where said ~~binary~~ content data is stored.

Claim 14 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said first storage area is allocated in a directory different from a directory where said ~~binary~~ content data is stored.

Claim 15 (Previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein at said first storage step, an area necessary for storing each metadata is located in the first block storage area.

Claim 16 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said metadata includes description of information specifying related ~~binary~~ content data.

Claim 17 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said metadata is described in a predetermined data description language.

Claim 18 (Original): The method according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined data description language is any one of XML (Extensible Markup Language), SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) and TIFF (Tagged Image File Format).

Claim 19 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said metadata abides by the DIG35 standard.

Claim 20 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said ~~binary~~ content data is at least one of still image data, video data, sound data and music data.

Claim 21 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said storage medium is any one of a magneto-optic disk, a floppy disk, a memory card and a hard disk.

Claim 22 (Currently amended): An information processing apparatus for storing a plurality of files having both ~~binary~~ content data and metadata related to the ~~binary~~ content data into a

storage medium, comprising:

reading means for reading a file;

determining means for determining whether the read file includes metadata;

separating means for separating the read file into metadata and content data if it is determined by said determining means that the read file includes metadata;

first storage means for storing said metadata of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file into a first block storage area that is a continuous area capable of storing metadata of the plurality of files on said storage medium;

second storage means storing ~~binary~~ content data of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file related to said metadata into a second block storage area other than said first block storage area on said storage medium; and

third storage means for storing link information that links said metadata of the plurality of files stored in said first block storage area with ~~each of~~ said ~~binary~~ content data of the plurality of files stored in said second block storage area, in correspondence with said metadata, into said first block storage area,

wherein said third storage means stores each of said link information into an area adjacent to an area where corresponding metadata is stored.

Claim 23 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said adjacent area is a sector next to the area where said metadata is stored.

Claim 24 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said third storage means allocates an adjacent area having a fixed length, and stores said link information in the area.

Claim 25 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said link information is described as a path and a file name of said ~~binary~~ content data.

Claim 26 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said link information is a head sector number of an area where said ~~binary~~ content data is stored.

Claim 27 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising registration means for registering link information, that links said metadata stored in said first block storage area with said ~~binary~~ content data stored in said second block storage area, in a database.

Claims 28-30 (Cancelled).

Claim 31 (Previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said storage medium is a magneto-optic disk, and wherein an inner radial side of said magneto-optic disk is allocated as said first block storage area.

Claim 32 (Previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said first block storage area is allocated by generating an area file having a size the same as that of said first block storage area and holding the file on said storage medium.

Claim 33 (Previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein said first storage means deletes said area file, then stores said metadata from a start position of an area where said file has been stored, and again holds a remaining area of said first block storage area following storage of said metadata as an area file.

Claim 34 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said first block storage area is allocated in a directory where said ~~binary~~ content data is stored.

Claim 35 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said first block storage area is allocated in a directory different from a directory where said ~~binary~~ content data is stored.

Claim 36 (Previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein an area

necessary for storing each metadata is located in the first block storage area.

Claim 37 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said metadata includes description of information specifying related ~~binary~~ content data.

Claim 38 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said metadata is described in a predetermined data description language.

Claim 39 (Currently Amended): A control program for a computer to execute an information processing method for storing a plurality of files having both ~~binary~~ content data and metadata related to the ~~binary~~ content data into a storage medium, wherein said information processing method comprising:

a reading step of reading a file;

a determining step of determining whether the read file includes metadata;

a separating step of separating the read file into metadata and content data if it is determined in the determining step that the read file includes metadata;

a first storage step of storing said metadata of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file into a first block storage area that is a continuous area capable of storing metadata of the plurality of files on said storage medium;

a second storage step of storing ~~binary~~ content data of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file related to said metadata into a second block storage area other than said first block storage area on said storage medium; and

a third storage step of storing link information that links said metadata of the plurality of files stored in said first block storage area with said ~~binary~~ content data of the plurality of files stored in said second block storage area, in correspondence with said metadata, into said first block storage area,

wherein at third storage step, each of said link information is stored into an area adjacent to an area where corresponding metadata is stored.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): A storage medium holding a control program for a computer to execute an information processing method for storing a plurality of files having both ~~binary~~ content data and metadata related to the ~~binary~~ content data into a storage medium, wherein said information processing method comprising:

a reading step of reading a file;

a determining step of determining whether the read file includes metadata;

a separating step of separating the read file into metadata and content data if it is determined in the determining step that the read file includes metadata;

a first storage step of storing said metadata of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file into a first block storage area that is a continuous area capable of storing metadata of the plurality of files on said storage medium;

a second storage step of storing ~~binary~~ content data of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file related to said metadata into a second block storage area other than said first block storage area on said storage medium; and

a third storage step of storing link information that links said metadata of the plurality of files stored in said first block storage area with said ~~binary~~ content data of the plurality of files stored in said second block storage area, in correspondence with said metadata, into said first block storage area,

wherein at third storage step, each of said link information is stored into an area adjacent to an area where corresponding metadata is stored.

Claims 41-42 (Cancelled)

Claim 43 (Currently Amended): An information processing apparatus for storing a plurality of files having both ~~binary~~ content data and metadata related to the ~~binary~~ content data into a storage medium, comprising:

reading means for reading a file;

determining means for determining whether the read file includes metadata;

separating means for separating the read file into metadata and content data if it is determined by said determining means that the read file includes metadata;

a first storage unit configured to store said metadata of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file into a first block storage area that is a continuous area capable of storing metadata of the plurality of files on said storage medium;

a second storage unit configured to store ~~binary~~ content data of the ~~plurality of files~~ read file related to said metadata into a second block storage area other than said first block storage area on said storage medium; and

a third storage unit adapted to store link information that links said metadata of the plurality of files stored in said first block storage area with ~~each of~~ said ~~binary~~ content data of the plurality of files stored in said second block storage area, in correspondence with said metadata, into said first block storage area,

wherein said third storage unit stores each of said link information into an area adjacent to where said corresponding metadata is stored.